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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/963,909	09/26/2001	Christian Lorenz	TRW(ASG)5930	9434

7590 11/29/2002

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EXAMINER	
VAN PELT, BRADLEY J	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3682	

DATE MAILED: 11/29/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/963,909

Applicant(s)

LORENZ, CHRISTIAN

Examiner

Bradley J Van Pelt

Art Unit

3682

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 November 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 5,6 and 9-12 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,7 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election of Group C, Fig. 4, in Paper No. 5 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).

Claims 5, 6, and 9-12 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in Paper No. 5.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: claim 1, line 3 "an vibration decoupling means" should be changed to --a vibration decoupling means--.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 7, lines 2 and 3 include the limitation "an elastic equalizing element being provided so as to be arranged between said receiving shell and said pin." Since claim 4, line 2 includes the limitation "elastic bearing," it is not clear as to how many elastic elements are included in the claimed structure in accordance with the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Art Unit: 3682

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

6. Claims 1-4, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Fujita (USPN 6,139,051).

Re: claim 1, Fujita discloses a vehicle steering wheel (W1), Fig. 4, comprising a hub (B), a steering wheel rim (R), and at least one spoke (S) having at least one spoke section, a vibration-decoupling means (H) being provided on said spoke which acts in all directions and at least largely isolates said steering wheel rim in terms of vibrations from said at least one section of said spoke.

Re: claim 2, Fujita discloses said vibration-decoupling means is provided at a transition point (58) of said spoke to said steering wheel rim.

Re: claim 3, Fujita discloses said vibration-decoupling means is provided inside said spoke and separates spoke sections from each other in terms of vibrations.

Re: claim 4, Fujita discloses said vibration-decoupling means is formed by an elastic bearing (47e), Fig. 6.

Re: claim 7, Fujita discloses said bearing has a pin (56) and a receiving shell (39) for said pin, an elastic equalizing element (47e) being provided so as to be arranged between said receiving shell and said pin.

Re: claim 8, Fujita discloses said steering wheel rim has a skeleton ring (23) and wherein one of said pin and said receiving shell is fastened to said skeleton ring, said spoke comprising said receiving shell and said pin, respectively.


Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following references include vibration-damping apparatuses in steering mechanisms: Kamata et al. (USPN 4,712,446), Yamazawa et al. (USPN 4,821,598), Kawaguchi et al. (USPN 5,024,464), Martin et al. (USPN 5,508,482), Ulbrich et al. (USPN 6,354,622), Kadota (JP 56-099858), Fujise (JP 01-229763).

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is (703)305-8176. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on (703)308-3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703)305-3597.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-2168.

BJVP 
November 25, 2002


CHONG H. KIM
PRIMARY EXAMINER